

A TASTY COMBINATION

# EAT B-Sharp Super Pack £1370

**FOR** Pre-fitted cartridge; balanced performance

**AGAINST** Gloss finish could be tidier; manual speed change



**EAT must be** one of the strangest hi-fi company names we've come across. The initials stand for European Audio Team, and the brand started off manufacturing high-quality valves before venturing into turntables in 2009. Its products are designed and made by a specialist team within the Pro-Ject factory.

The B-Sharp is the company's entry-level deck and comes with the B-Note arm, the combination selling for £1200. The Super Pack adds an Ortofon 2M Blue moving-magnet cartridge (£185 if bought separately) into the mix.

## DIY-friendly

The cartridge is pre-fitted and the deck as a whole is easy to set up. While it requires a little more assembly than the likes of Clearaudio's Concept MM, we think most people will be able to get up and running in short order.

With that close relationship to Pro-Ject, it's no surprise to find certain parts looking familiar, including the plastic sub-platter and damped arm counterweight, but there's enough in the way of distinctive engineering to have the B-Sharp come across as a distinct product in its own right.

Build is generally good, though the gloss-black finish of our review sample (there's also a white option) isn't as classy or neatly applied as we'd have hoped. The B-Note arm feels nicely made and is a pleasure to use. Its carbon fibre arm tube is a tech highlight and the

EAT's association with Pro-Ject is clearly in evidence here and has clear benefits

overall design offers a wide range of adjustability. The pre-fitted Ortofon 2M Blue cartridge is a solid performer and tracks securely at around 1.85g.

We run our test using Rega's Elex-R amplifier and Neat's IOTA Alpha speakers as well as our reference set-up of Cyrus Signature phono stage/Gamut D3i/D200i pre/power and ATC SCM50 speakers. It's a combination that's transparent enough to reveal the B-Sharp's limits.

## Drive and power aplenty

Those limits are wide, with the package delivering a terrific sound for the money. With Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* the B-Sharp delivers a dramatic but composed rendition that captures the drive and power of the piece well. It has no trouble punching out the music's explosive crescendos, rendering the wide-ranging dynamics with control.

Stereo imaging is precise and stable; the deck casting a decently proportioned soundstage and populating it with nicely



## KEY FEATURES



Cartridge included



Carbon-fibre arm



Isolated inner chassis

layered and solidly located instruments. There's a good sense of organisation here and the ability to keep a grip on low-level instrumental strands (and subtle acoustic clues of the concert hall).

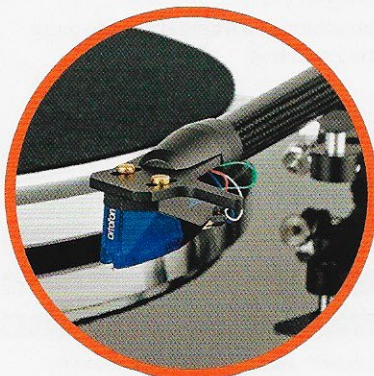
Detail levels are good, and the 2M Blue remains as even-handed as we remember, although we think the EAT is talented enough to be used with pricier, more capable alternatives.

We switch to Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds' *The Boatman's Call* and enjoy the EAT's expressive midrange. Cave's voice on *Into My Arms* comes through with passion, while the instrumentation is cohesive and rhythmic.

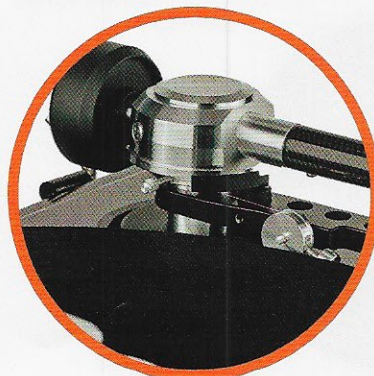
The EAT isn't fussy about genre. It sounds right at home with music as diverse as Nirvana's *Nevermind* to Dukas's *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*.

The B-Sharp is a fine alternative to Rega's similarly priced Planar 6/Ania MC combination. The Rega makes more of the rhythmic and dynamic elements of the music, but the EAT counters with control, composure and balance. It's a fine deck that's well worth searching out.

## IN DETAIL...



The addition of Ortofon's 2M Blue cartridge makes this the 'Super Pack'



The sleek, carbon-fibre B-Note tonearm offers a wide range of adjustability

## WHAT HI-FI? says

Rating ★★★★★

SOUND ★★★★★

FEATURES ★★★★★

BUILD ★★★★★

**VERDICT** The B-Sharp is a fine deck with a broad range of talents that make it a decent alternative to the Rega Planar 6